

## **DUSTBUSTERS SPOTLIGHT LATEST MILESTONES DURING PRESS CONFERENCE**

Since the early 1990's, wind and abandoned desert farm lands have provided fertile breeding ground for "dust bowl" conditions in the Mojave Desert, but ongoing research by the Antelope Valley Dustbusters is unearthing new ways of keeping the dust "down on the farm."

The latest findings of the research project – launched in 1991 for the purpose of finding solutions to fugitive dust blowing from disturbed and abandoned agricultural fields in the Antelope Valley - were announced during a press conference and informational meeting held on October 26 in Lancaster. The Dustbusters Task Force is a multi-agency fugitive dust research team comprised of representatives from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the University of California/Riverside (UCR), Southern California Edison (SCE), the AVAPCD, Desert Research Institute, the University of California/San Diego, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the L.A. World's Airport and the Antelope Valley Resource Conservation District.

Now in its third phase, the research project's current focus is on using irrigation and plant shelters in revegetating and stabilizing disturbed soil surfaces, applying soil suppressant chemicals to barren fields to halt soil erosion, and erecting wind fences to curb the movement of windblown dust and sand. During the conference, representatives from several stakeholder organizations – including Rob Farber of SCE, Dave Grantz of UCR, and Bret Banks and Alan De Salvio of the AVAPCD – presented progress reports on the Dustbusters' success in utilizing these innovative mechanisms as solutions to airborne dust, which not only reduces visibility, but can also aggravate asthma and other respiratory conditions in sensitive individuals.

"As a result of the Dustbuster's efforts, Antelope Valley residents can expect to breathe even cleaner, healthier air into the foreseeable future," said Bret Banks, AVAPCD Operations Manager.

Research in the project's first two phases focused on using both seeds and seedling plants to revegetate barren fields, and installing wind fences in sandy areas not conducive to revegetation. The current – and final – phase of the dust control research project is expected to extend through 2003.